

HOSPITAL AT MORGANTON.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS,

State Hospital, Morganton, N. C.

GENTLEMEN :—The undersigned, a committee from the State Board of Health, on August 21st made an official inspection of the hospital. We are glad to report that we found the general sanitary conditions most excellent, with one important exception. This exception was the imperfect classification of the patients. This, we learned from your Superintendent, could not be avoided, on account of the overcrowded condition of the institution. Knowing as we do the overwhelming and insistent demands upon you for room for the many outside insane, we feel, while deprecating the fact, that criticism of the management would not be justifiable. We appreciate the difficulties of the situation and are satisfied that you are doing the best you can with the means at your disposal.

The most serious result flowing from this imperfect classification is the intermingling of tuberculous patients with the uninfected. The fact that tuberculosis is a communicable disease is now thoroughly established. It is always transmitted from one case to another, either directly or indirectly. While tuberculosis is directly transmitted by kissing, the more frequent method of direct conveyance is through the fine mist or spray, the minute droplets of which are loaded with the bacilli, which is expelled into the air in loud talking, laughing, sneezing and coughing. It has been demonstrated by actual experiment that the bacilli are propelled in the acts referred to as far as a yard. It has also been shown that guinea pigs have been infected by a consumptive's talking and coughing into a box containing them—in one experiment six out of twenty-five contracting the disease and dying from it.

The method of transmission that is generally accepted as the most common is indirectly, through the dried sputum, which in the form of dust floats in the air and is inspired directly into the lungs. Acting upon this belief the chief effort in the prevention of tuberculosis is to instruct the patient so to care for his own sputum that it can never become dry before its destruction—by spitting into cuspidors containing a disinfectant, or at least water, upon bits of cloth to be burned, etc. This manifestly requires intelligent interest and conscientious care on the part of the patient. It is extremely difficult to get consumptives in their right minds to take these precautions, and utterly hopeless, of course, in the mentally alienated. They spit on the floor, walls, bedclothes, and anywhere and everywhere, and talk and cough directly into one another's faces without hesitation. With the most scrupulous and painstaking care, efficient disinfection is absolutely out of the question.

Owing to the impaired vitality associated with their condition and increased by confinement, the insane are particularly susceptible to